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# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

CONTINUING "THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER"

APRIL 1918

## EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

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At the annual meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, held in Chicago March 21-23, much attention was given to the definition of the **Recognition of the Junior High School** junior high school and to a consideration of its place in the general organization of American schools. The Commission on Secondary Schools had prepared through its secretary, Professor C. O. Davis, of Michigan, a very full statement of the facts regarding junior high schools within the territory of the Association, and the Commission on Unit Courses and Curricula reported recommendations on the aims of the junior high school and on its courses and methods of organization.

It is not possible here to take up in full the reports of the commissions or the actions of the Association. A few matters of major importance may, however, be noted. Of the high schools on the approved list of the Association for 1917, 25.78 per cent have junior high school organization in some form. When it is remembered that the approved list of this Association includes the 1,140 leading high schools from Ohio on the east to Colorado on the west and from these states north to the boundaries of the United States, and when it is remembered that the junior high school movement is scarcely a decade old, the percentage reported is highly significant. No educational movement has spread more rapidly than this.

The aggregate enrolment of pupils amounts to nearly 50,000, and the number of teachers is 2,760.

Certain interesting facts regarding the courses of study may be mentioned. Following are the figures which represent the percentage of schools offering courses in the subjects mentioned: Latin, 27.64; modern languages, 27.30; algebra, 24.23; general science, 30.37; manual training, 88.73; domestic science, 88.39; commercial work, 16.72; distinctive vocational work, 5.11. From these figures it is evident that there is very little real ground for the anxiety often expressed by the opponents of the junior high school that this institution is to become a pernicious device for bringing premature trade education into the public schools.

Indeed, the statement of the purposes of the junior high school adopted by the Association makes it clear that the broadest possible aims are in the minds of those who are organizing this new institution. The aims enumerated are as follows:

1. To continue through its instructional program the aims of public education in a democracy.
2. To reduce to the minimum the elimination of pupils by offering types of work best suited to their interests, needs, and capacities.
3. To give the pupil an opportunity under systematic educational guidance to discover his dominant interests, capacities, and limitations with reference to his future vocational activities or the continuance of his education in higher schools.
4. To economize time through such organization and administration of subjects and courses both for those who will continue their education in higher schools and for those who will enter immediately into life's activities.

The action of the Association with regard to admission to the junior high school was as follows:

Admission of pupils into the junior high school shall be determined on the basis of maturity and ability of the pupil to profit by the junior high school work offered, rather than by completion of the sixth grade solely. Therefore,

a) All pupils who have completed the first six grades of the elementary school should be promoted to the junior high school.

b) All mentally normal but retarded pupils should be transferred to the junior high school at least one full year before the legal age for leaving school. For many of these, special educational provision must be made.

c) Other children who have shown marked ability even though they have not completed the sixth grade should be admitted.

These quotations are enough to indicate the general spirit of the Association's action. There can be no doubt that the influence of this action will be to give a strong impetus to the movement. At the same time the movement will be directed into more definite channels by the careful and comprehensive survey which furnished the basis of the Association's action.

The problem of providing practice teaching for students who are in training in state normal schools has always been a matter of grave difficulty. Where normal schools have grown to the huge size attained in several of the institutions in the central states, the problem becomes almost insoluble.

The Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls is one of the largest normal institutions in the world. It is situated in a small town which is quite incapable of providing adequate practice facilities. The commission which recently surveyed the higher institutions of education in Iowa recommended the breaking up of normal training in that state and the establishment of several normal schools. One of the chief reasons for this recommendation was the difficulty of finding adequate practice facilities. Indeed, it is quite impossible to think of the existing facilities in that institution as adequate.

Now comes a new complication. Certain citizens have applied to the courts to compel the Board of Education of Cedar Falls to close the schools of the town to practice teaching. Up to this time such teaching has been permitted. The court granted the injunction. As this issue of the *Journal* goes to press an appeal is pending. The situation as it was after the granting of the injunction is reported in the following clipping from the *Waterloo Times-Tribune*:

The decision handed down by Judge Boies leaves no doubt in the minds of the school board or anyone else but that the court believes that student teachers must be discontinued and that the court intends that the practice be discontinued at once.

The decision in the case is as follows:

"I find that the arrangement known in the record as 'co-operative plan,' under which for a number of years students of the Iowa State Teachers College have been permitted as a part of their training to engage in practice teaching

of the pupils in the public schools of Cedar Falls, under the supervision of critic teachers employed by and paid in whole or in part by the normal school, was illegal as heretofore carried on. Said college students who have been engaged in practice teaching were not provided with teachers' certificates and were not under contract with the school board of the Independent District of Cedar Falls, as required by law.

"The defendants now propose that in the future they will avoid the illegalities mentioned by procuring for each practice teacher a provisional certificate under Section 2734-p2 of the Supplement to the Code, and have the Independent School District of Cedar Falls enter into a teacher's contract with each practice teacher for a twelve-weeks term, for a compensation of one dollar.

"It seems to me that the proposed plan of arming each of these practice teachers with provisional certificates obtained in wholesale lots, for the apparent purpose of accommodating these students of the training college, rather than supplying the needs of the public schools, is merely an attempted evasion or, at the most, a colorable compliance with the school laws of the state, which are designed to give to the public schools the benefit of the services of teachers holding regular teachers' certificates as vouchers that they possess certain specified qualifications.

"Nor do I believe that the short term, twelve week contracts, for the nominal compensation of one dollar, are such teacher's contracts as are contemplated by our statute.

"The 'co-operative plan' is also illegal and unwarranted in law, for the reason that it involves the turning over of the public school property, equipment and pupils for use by the student teachers for practice teaching under critic teachers who are employed by and paid, wholly or in part, by the State Teachers College. The primary purposes of such supervised teaching is to enable the normal students to obtain sufficient credits to enable them to graduate from the Teachers College, and is to a considerable extent simply converting the public schools into a school of pedagogy carried on by instructors from the college, who are not and could not legally be in the employ of or under contract for such purpose with the public school board.

"I am aware that the school board of a public school is vested with a wide discretion in the management of school affairs, and that the courts have no right to interfere except in a case where it is plain the board has, by acting illegally, exceeded its powers.

"It seems to me this is such a case, and it is, therefore, ordered that a writ of mandamus issue, directing the defendants to discontinue the existing arrangement, under which normal students not holding regular certificates are permitted to engage in practice teaching in the public schools of Cedar Falls under critic teachers employed by the college, and the defendants are enjoined from using the public school buildings and equipment for the purpose of teaching pedagogy by normal critic teachers to college students. The temporary injunction issued against the defendant H. C. Moeller, county superintendent,

is made permanent, and it is ordered that judgment and decree be entered in accordance herewith."

The case brought by the plaintiffs against the school board, the county superintendent and the city superintendent of schools was filed in the district court December 3, 1917.

The original petition requested the court to issue a temporary injunction and mandamus to the effect that no person be engaged as a teacher in the Cedar Falls schools who had not a certificate to teach. It also asked the court to restrain payment of funds by the school board to supervisors or critics who were engaged in teaching at the Iowa State Teachers' college.

The case was brought to trial at the January term of the Black Hawk county district court and attracted wide interest throughout the city of Cedar Falls, Waterloo and the state.

The defendants attempted to show that the student-teacher system was all right and a good thing for both the pupil in the city schools as well as to the student teacher.

The plaintiffs argued points of law regarding the case and contended that the practice was entirely illegal and should not be allowed to continue. Many patrons of the public schools of Cedar Falls were called as witnesses and testified they strongly objected to the practice. The trial lasted an entire week.

This decision handed down by Judge Boies will have a direct bearing on other normal schools throughout Iowa.

Many other schools in Iowa where normal colleges are located have student teachers and some have objected to the practice. It is probable this decision will be used as an example in other normal cities.

Following the announcement of the court's decision four members of the school faculty tendered their resignations, but at the request of the members of the board reconsidered their action last evening and will remain until the close of the year.

The case is indeed one which will excite the widest interest, for it revives an issue which comes up with the establishment of every normal school.

#### **The Issue at Cedar Falls**

The court seems to overlook the fact that the state is under obligation to provide a place where teachers can be trained. The schools of Cedar Falls are state schools, not schools of the town. If the state of Iowa recognizes its obligation to Cedar Falls and to the other towns of the state, then it must devise some legal means of providing practice teaching for teachers in training.

In England this principle is clearly recognized. Every school receiving public support is by virtue of that fact subject to the

demands of the Central Board of Education and this same Central Board is in charge of the normal institutions. The adjustment is therefore direct and easy.

The difficulty in Iowa grows in part out of the scattered and indefinite character of our American state educational organization and in part out of the fact that the Iowa State Teachers College has outgrown the section of the state in which it is located and is yet determined to grow still larger and to prevent the establishment of another normal institution in the state.

From various parts of the country come evidences that there is a scarcity of teachers. The following clipping from the *New York Globe* describes the situation in New York City:

**The Supply of Teachers**

The supply of teachers for elementary schools is being depleted rapidly. About 375 women were appointed to begin service on the first of February, but an unusually large percentage of these declined to serve. These declinations, together with a large number of resignations and the organization of new classes, have increased the number of vacancies to be filled on April 1 to nearly 350. There are less than 1,000 names on the eligible list, where a year ago there were 2,000 teachers awaiting appointment. Largely because of the long eligible list and the inability to secure an assignment within a reasonable time the teachers sought other work, and now refuse to give up these positions to teach. Unless something is done to increase the supply of teachers it will not be long before the eligible lists will be exhausted. In all three of the city training schools for teachers today there are fewer than one thousand girls preparing to teach. This represents the nucleus of the supply of teachers for two years. At the present rate of appointment the Board of Education needs an eligible list of about 1,500 women yearly.

Present plans of the superintendents call for appointments that will probably exhaust the February, 1917, eligible list down to 72 per cent, although it is possible that the girls with 72 per cent will also be named. The few men on the list will be appointed. Kindergarten teachers will be nominated down to 76.5 on the June, 1915, list.

There are also a number of vacancies in the upper grade classes, especially in history and civics, sewing, Gregg and Pittman stenography, music, physical training, drawing, English, biology, bookkeeping, and mathematics. These will be filled by the promotion of teachers from the lower grades.

It is not difficult to find a reason why as many girls are not preparing to teach as in other years. The fact that for some years there was a long eligible list and that those who qualified were forced to wait from one to two years for

a position has not encouraged girls to take up teaching. Now when eligible lists are being exhausted more quickly other positions offer better inducements and they are declining appointment.

In what other service today are the financial returns so meager as in teaching? The girl who graduates from high school and then completes a two-year course of training begins teaching at \$800 a year and cannot receive more until she has taught for three years. Then for three years more she receives \$900.

It is necessary only to compare these returns with the inducements offered to high-school pupils who have spent six months in business schools to realize why it is that teaching isn't attracting the best pupils, as it once did.

The economic situation makes it legitimate to call attention vigorously to the matter of teachers' salaries. If the schools of this country are to be supplied with teachers, especially trained teachers, there must be an increase in teachers' salaries. The following statement, issued by the Commission of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, presents a number of interesting points of view, especially when it is remembered that the lack of state requirements for certification of teachers relates to the state which is older in educational matters than any other in the Union:

**Teachers'  
Salaries**

An educational bill of importance is now in the hands of the Committee on Education of the Legislature. It is House Bill, No. 1069, which provides for a minimum salary and state certification for public day school teachers.

This twofold bill, if enacted, will undoubtedly result in a great improvement, materially and professionally, of the teaching force, especially in the small towns of the State. Indeed the need of such legislation is imperative, and its benefits will probably be more notable throughout the Commonwealth than those of any other educational legislation within a quarter of a century.

For years much has been heard from capital and labor circles of the menace to American conditions, industries, and institutions from the pauper labor of Europe, but as yet, neither labor nor capital has lashed itself into any noticeable fury of indignation over the pauper wages paid in certain Massachusetts towns to the public-school teachers who to the best of their ability are endeavoring to develop intelligent, patriotic Americans of the boys and girls entrusted to their care.

According to a bulletin of the State Board of Education, the following data concerning teachers' salaries in towns of less than 5,000 population for the full school year ending 1916 give some idea of the necessity of a minimum salary law: 1,411 teachers received less than \$500; 1,024 received \$450 or less; 581,



\$400 or less; 164, \$350 or less; 35, \$300 or less; 10, \$260 or less; 3 received \$216; and 1 received as little as \$170.

The bill provides that the minimum salary shall be \$550; it becomes operative, as does the provision for state certification, on January 1, 1919.

Opponents of a state minimum salary law for teachers argue that it would interfere with local autonomy in school affairs. This objection is far from convincing, inasmuch as the state from its earliest days has made the education of its citizens one of its own primary obligations. In accordance therewith the Constitution explicitly provides that the Legislature shall cherish "the interests of the public schools and the grammar schools in the towns"; as a result of this injunction the statutes pertaining to public instruction are so numerous as to require 120 pages to hold them. Many of these laws, whether of state-wide application or relating specifically to certain cities and towns, naturally restrict local action in school matters.

Thirteen states already have enacted minimum salary laws for public-school teachers. They are Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and West Virginia.

As to state certification, it is a remarkable fact that the state exacts no standard whatever of preparation as a prerequisite for teaching in the elementary schools. With no restrictions or barriers set by the state, and with no local system of certification such as prevails in the cities and larger towns, many very inadequately prepared persons drift into the business of teaching. Their services are in demand, for they are procurable at a very low rate of compensation. In many communities, saving money in this way regardless of the quality of the instruction and at the expense of the children is considered as business acumen and high financiering on the part of the school committees responsible.

In this state annually, 150 teachers of this inadequately prepared class enter the service, competing with the well prepared graduates of the college and of the state normal schools, and in many cases compelling the latter to seek positions in other states, where higher salaries and greater professional preparations shut out the competition of the poorly prepared and the low salaried. A state certification system would be the most potent force in retaining for the service of the state those who at her expense have been trained in her institutions for teaching.

To establish a state-wide certification requirement would be but following two precedents already established that bring forth beneficial results, the first by act of fourteen years ago providing that after January 1, 1905, no person shall be elected to a union superintendency who does not hold a certificate of fitness and competency from the State Board of Education; the second by act of several years ago providing that after July 1, 1912, no person shall be eligible to teach in a high school aided directly by the Commonwealth who

does not hold a high-school teacher's certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

The bill provides that the certificates will be issued by a state certifying board of five members under the management and direction of the State Board of Education. Under the bill all teachers now in service or on leave of absence who previous to the passage of this measure will have been certified by any city or town shall be exempt from any other requirements for state certification; and teachers not locally certified who will have taught for a continuous period of not less than six months immediately preceding the first day of July, 1918, will receive State certification, providing an application, with a statement of satisfactory service, is made to the certifying board prior to November 1, 1918. All other teachers if found qualified by examination or otherwise shall be granted certificates.

Under the provisions of the bill, school committees of cities or towns may require as conditions of service in the public schools thereof, such qualifications as they may deem desirable, in addition to those required by the state certifying board.

The problem of doing the work of a board of education without breaking the board up into isolated committees has been met and  
**Committees of** in the opinion of Mr. Springer, the president of the  
**a Board of** Board of Education of Ann Arbor, Michigan, solved  
**Education** by the following device, which he is good enough to  
report in full to the *Journal*:

Ann Arbor's Board of Education consists of nine members, three being elected each year for a term of three years. Prior to two years ago it had been operating by means of nine committees, each member of the Board serving as chairman of one committee, second member of another committee, and third member of a third committee. In most instances this form of organization resulted in the chairman of the committee doing the work of that particular committee.

Two years ago the committees were reduced to three with three members each. The Committee on Educational Interests took over the work of the Committees on Teachers, Textbooks, Course of Study, and Janitors. The Committee on Finance and Property took over the work of the Committees on Finance, Buildings and Grounds, and Supplies. The Committee on Allied Activities took over the work of the Committees on Health, Library, Playgrounds, and Summer School. We found that this form of committee work had a decided advantage over the old form in that it brought about a definite consultation by the members of the committees concerning the matters intrusted to their care.

In organizing the Board this year the three committees were abolished and a Rotating Executive Committee was established. This committee consisted, in the first instance, of three members to serve respectively one month, two months, and three months. Each month the retiring member serves as chairman of the committee and at the close of the monthly meeting the second member of the committee becomes chairman, the third member moves up to second place and a new member is appointed as the third member of the committee. This method permits a continuity of action as at all times the majority of the committee are hold-overs. The Board of Education meets monthly and refers all matters of detail to the Executive Committee with power to act. The Executive Committee holds weekly meetings. The chairman of the committee presents a monthly report to the Board of Education and a synopsis of the weekly meetings is sent to the members of the Board. There is also sent to the members of the Board three days in advance of its meeting a statement as to the general matters which will be referred to the Board by the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

One of the arguments often given for the small school board is that it can act as a committee of the whole and thus study every phase of the school problems. The practical working out, however, of even the small school board is that much work is referred to special committees appointed to consider matters of a similar nature. The value of the rotating committee plan of organization is that during the year every member of the Board will touch every phase of school activity and in that way will become in a short space of time better acquainted with school problems than is possible under any other arrangement. The number of months which a member will serve on this Executive Committee in any year will of course be dependent upon the size of the Board and the size of the committee. This plan provides a method by which action may be secured by the superintendent at any time on any matter of detail, for the Executive Committee, while not having power to establish new policies, may act on any matter of detail requiring immediate attention.